

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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IO-11 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1065

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3731

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PARM, NATO, UR, US

SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIALS ON MBFR

1. SUMMARY: MFA OFFICIALS IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS HERE CONTINUE TO PAINT THE NEW EASTERN PROPOSAL IN VIENNA IN COLORS BEST SUITED TO MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE TO THE WEST. TWO SEPARATE OFFICIALS IN POSITIONS TO BE WELL INFORMED ON THE INTRICACIES OF MBFR HAVE EMPHASIZED THE CONCESSIONS THE EAST HAS MADE IN THE PHASING APPROACH EMBODIED IN THE NEW PROPOSAL, MINIMIZING THE STRINGENCY OF THE CONTINUING EASTERN REQUIREMENT FOR REDUCTION COMMITMENTS BY NON-U.S. DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST STAGE. ONE OFFICIAL ALSO SUGGESTED THAT A "COMPOSITE APPROACH"--I.E., A MIXED PACKAGE--MIGHT BE THE SOLUTION TO ARMAMENTS REDUCTION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A DISCUSSION OF MBFR MARCH 9, OLEG SOKOLOV, THE
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OFFICER IN CHARGE OF MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS FOR MFA'S USA

DIVISION, TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE NEW EASTERN PROPOSAL CONTAINS NO REQUIREMENT THAT NON-U.S. DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN MBFR ASSUME CONCRETE, REPEAT CONCRETE, REDUCTION COMMITMENTS DURING FIRST STAGE NEGOTIATIONS. SOKOLOV EMPHASIZED THAT ALL THAT WOULD BE NECESSARY WOULD BE THAT THEY COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE PRINCIPLE OF REDUCTION IN THE SECOND STAGE, WITHOUT SPECIFYING DETAILED NATURE OF THE REDUCTIONS.

3. IN A CONVERSATION MARCH 5, A.N. KASHIRIN, A COUNSELOR IN MFA'S INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION DIVISION HANDLING ARMS CONTROL QUESTIONS AND A ONE-TIME MEMBER OF THE SOVIET MBFR DELEGATION, ASSERTED THAT UNDER THE NEW PROPOSAL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS OTHER THAN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE U.S. WOULD BE OBLIGATED TO AGREE DURING THE FIRST STAGE TO A FREEZE OF THEIR FORCES--UNDER NATIONAL CEILINGS--LEAVING THE QUESTION OF REDUCTIONS TO BE SETTLED IN SECOND STAGE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. WHEN KASHIRIN AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONVERSATION ASKED US FOR OUR REACTION TO THE NEW PROPOSAL, WE HAD ADMITTED THAT IT WAS WORTHY OF STUDY, BUT THAT SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS WERE CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE--SUCH AS THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE WEST REDUCE AS MANY TANKS AS THE EAST. KASHIRIN COUNTERED WITH THE USUAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT SOVIET REFUSAL TO ALTER THE EXISTING CORRELATION OF FORCES IN THE AREA, BUT IN THE END SUGGESTED THAT A "COMPOSITE APPROACH" (KOMPLEKSNYY PODKHOD) TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE "TOAALITY" OF FORCES IN THE AREA MIGHT ALLOW A SOLUTION TO BE REACHED. WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS A MIXED PACKAGE APPROACH, EMBOFF ASKED HIM IF THIS WOULD NOT MAKE EVEN MORE NECESSARY AN EARLY EXCHANGE OF DATA. HE REPLIED ONLY THAT THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN SUCH AN EXCHANGE WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THE CONVERSATION TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON FORCE DEFINITION, WITH HIS ONLY NOTEWORTHY REMARK BEING RESURRECTION OF THE QUESTION OF WHETHER NATO CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT SOMEHOW BE CONSIDERED IN ARRIVING AT TOTALS FOR NATO FORCES.

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5. COMMENT. WE ARE NOT CLEAR IN WHAT DETAIL THE EASTERN DELEGATIONS IN VIENNA HAVE SPELLED OUT THE REQUIREMENT FOR REDUCTION COMMITMENTS BY NON-U.S. DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST STAGE UNDER THEIR NEW PROPOSALS. BOTH SOKOLOV AND KASHIRIN, HOWEVER, WENT TO SOME TROUBLE IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH US TO EXPLAIN HOW CLOSELY THEIR NEW PROPOSAL PARALLELS THE ORIGINAL NATO PROPOSAL'S PHASING APPROACH IN THIS REGARD. KASHIRIN'S EXPLANATION MASKED

THE REQUIREMENT FOR FIRST-STAGE REDUCTION COMMITMENTS ALMOST
TO THE POINT OF DISAPPEARANCE, THOUGH HE DID NOT
ASSERT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SUCH
REQUIREMENT. HIS STATEMENT THAT THE FREEZE ON TROOP
LEVELS BETWEEN STAGES WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF NATIONAL
CEILINGS, HOWEVER, INDICATES CONTINUING SOVIET OBDURACY
ON THAT ISSUE.

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